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SUBJECT: JAPANESE MORNING PRESS HIGHLIGHTS 09/05/07

Index:

Machimura diplomacy:

- 1) Foreign Minister Machimura, Australian counterpart agree in meeting in Sydney to speed up efforts to sign an EPA
- 2) Japan, Australia will draft bilateral security guidelines
- 3) Australia's Foreign Minister Downer, others in Sydney meetings with Foreign Minister Machimura urge Japan to extend anti-terror law

Defense and security affairs:

- 4) Defense Minister Komura confirms that government planning to deploy missile-intercepting PAC-3s in parks in Tokyo region
- 5) Government, ruling camp considering submitting new anti-terrorism bill to the Diet
- 6) Aim of the government in considering a new anti-terror is to somehow keep the SDF dispatch alive
- 7) DPJ readies its lawmakers to fight the Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Law in the Diet

Political agenda:

- 8) Extra Diet session that opens Sept 10 will see major clashes between ruling and opposition camps on LDP's "politics and money" scandals
- 9) Resignation of LDP lawmaker Kobayashi another blow for the Abe administration: triple punch of three resignations in three days
- 10) Environment Minister Kamoshita's political fund organization cannot account for 8 million yen in incoming funds
- 11) Postal rebel Hiranuma to be restored to the LDP

12) Strategy of the DPJ will be to put veteran lawmakers on the front line to clash with ruling camp in the Diet, while junior lawmakers will focus on general election

13) New Party Japan's Tanaka to form joint Diet group with DPJ

Articles:

1) Machimura, Downer agree to accelerate EPA talks; APEC cabinet ministerial to open today

NIKKEI (Page 5) (Full)
September 5, 2007

Kotaro Hidaka, Sydney

Foreign Minister Nobutaka Machimura held talks with his Australian counterpart Alexander Downer on September 4 ahead of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum slated to open on the 5th. The two leaders agreed to accelerate the bilateral talks on an economic partnership agreement (EPA) that started in late April. They also confirmed the need for major powers, including developing countries, such as China, to make serious efforts to reduce greenhouse gases as part of an international effort to combat global warming, which is certain to take center stage in the APEC forum.

Downer played up high public support for a Japan-Australia EPA. Machimura underlined the importance of further discussion toward next year, while citing difficulties, such as opening the Japanese farm market.

About global warming, Downer emphasized the need for both industrialized and developing nations to take appropriate measures. In response, Machimura said: "It would be meaningless if China and

TOKYO 00004108 002 OF 010

India are not included in the effort." A joint statement to be released at the end of the September 5-6 cabinet ministerial is expected to mention each country's effort to set energy-saving targets and cooperation in securing food and product safety.

2) Japan, Australia to concur on security cooperation guidelines

ASAHI (Page 4) (Full)
September 5, 2007

SYDNEY-Foreign Minister Machimura, now visiting Australia, met with Australian Foreign Minister Downer yesterday and the two basically agreed on an action plan that will serve as guidelines for bilateral security cooperation. The two countries are expected to reach a final agreement when their leaders meet this week. On global warming countermeasures, Machimura and Downer agreed that Japan and Australia will cooperate to create a framework involving advanced and developing countries.

According to a briefing by Japanese officials, the action plan will be worked out on the basis of a bilateral joint security declaration released in March this year. The action will be a roadmap for Japan and Australia to cooperate in the area of security in a broad sense, including peacekeeping operations, disaster relief activities, and border security.

"Both Japan and Australia are advanced countries, creditor powers, and US allies," Downer said. He added that Australia would like to cooperate closely with Japan in the security area. Machimura also said he was pleased to see the plan being shaped.

Japan has been backing up the antiterror drive in Afghanistan under the Antiterrorism Special Measures Law. On the issue of extending this antiterror law beyond its Nov. 1 expiry, Machimura said he would like to make efforts to get Diet approval for a legislative measure to extend the antiterror law. With this, Machimura asked Downer to stand behind him for the legislation. After his meeting with Downer, Machimura told reporters that he actually felt public opinion in the international community appreciates Japan for its Maritime Self-Defense Force's seaborne assistance activities in the Indian Ocean. "I want the opposition parties to listen more

sincerely to international public opinion," Machimura told reporters. He criticized Democratic Party of Japan (Minshuto) President Ichiro Ozawa and other opposition leaders for opposing the government's plan to extend the antiterror law.

3) Antiterrorism Law: Foreign Minister Machimura seeks support for extension in talks with Australian foreign minister

MAINICHI (Page 2) (Full)
September 5, 2007

Foreign Minister Nobutaka Machimura, now visiting Sydney to take part in an APEC ministerial meeting, yesterday met with Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer and Singapore Foreign Minister George Young-Boon Yeo. Referring to the Antiterrorism Special Measures Law, which expires on Nov. 1, Machimura during those talks sought support for the Japanese government's effort to extend it. He did so partly with the aim of checking the opposition camp, including the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ or Minshuto), which is opposing an extension.

TOKYO 00004108 003 OF 010

During his talks with Downer, Machimura said, "Whether it is possible to extend the law is beyond prediction, since it will be hard for the ruling camp to steer the Diet." He then said, "I would like Australia to support the Japanese government's effort." Downer replied, "I would like to offer assistance." Yeo also expressed his support.

4) PAC-3 anti-missile system: Defense Ministry considering public parks as deployment sites

ASAHI (Page 2) (Full)
September 5, 2007

Defense Minister Komura on September 4 acknowledged that his ministry is looking into the possibility of using parks, as well as the Self-Defense Forces' garrisons, as future deployment sites for the Patriot PAC-3 surface-to-air missile system now deployed at the Air Self-Defense Force's Iruma Base in Saitama Prefecture. He noted, "In order to defend key facilities and equipment in the center of the capital, the system must be deployed to a greater extent. There should be cases in which public land is used." He made this comment in response to an interview to the Asahi Shimbun and other dailies.

The Defense Ministry is considering several sites, including the Ground Self-Defense Force's (GSDF) Ichigaya Garrison in Shinjuku, Tokyo, and Nerima Garrison in Nerima, Yoyogi Park and Harumi Futo Park, as candidate sites for deploying the PAC-3 system.

Regarding talks with local communities that control candidate sites, Komura stopped short of making any categorical comment, only noting, "I cannot go any further regarding the present stage of the matter, because if I do so, I might cause trouble for the concerned municipalities, as talks with them have yet to take place."

5) New antiterror legislation eyed

YOMIURI (Page 1) (Full)
September 5, 2007

The Diet will shortly convene an extraordinary session this fall, during which the Antiterrorism Special Measures Law will become the top point at issue. The current law being time limited, the government and the ruling coalition of the Liberal Democratic Party and New Komeito yesterday began to give consideration to introducing a legislative measure that would create a new law stipulating Japan's role, including the Maritime Self-Defense Force's activities in the Indian Ocean. In order to extend the MSDF's assistance activities in the Indian Ocean, the government has so far planned to present a bill simply amending the existing law. However, the government and the ruling parties are now mulling whether to give up the idea of presenting that bill. In addition, the government and the ruling coalition would indicate their willingness to introduce the standpoints of the leading opposition Democratic Party of Japan

(Minshuto) in the process of drafting the new legislative measure. They hope in this way to obtain the DPJ's support as much as possible.

The antiterror law is due to expire Nov. 1. After its expiry, the MSDF will not be allowed to continue its assistance activities. Moreover, the law will no longer be in effect. If that is the case, the Diet can no longer continue deliberations on that law.

TOKYO 00004108 004 OF 010

The government and the ruling parties deem it extremely difficult to amend the anti-terror law before its expiry as long as the DPJ, which controls the House of Councillors, is opposed to extending it. As it stands, the government and the ruling coalition deem it important to at least continue Diet deliberations on anti-terror legislation even after recalling MSDF vessels on Nov. 1.

According to government sources, the newly planned legislation will stipulate the MSDF's refueling activities in the Indian Ocean. Meanwhile, the DPJ has been calling on the government to disclose information about the MSDF's refueling activities and to require the Diet's prior approval for the MSDF's overseas activities. The government and the ruling coalition are thinking of incorporating these points in the new legislation. The DPJ is now working out its own plan to implement humanitarian and reconstruction assistance to Afghanistan. In consideration of this, the government and the ruling coalition will consider incorporating such additional activities in the new legislation.

6) Commentary: New antiterror legislation aimed at continuing SDF's overseas activities

YOMIURI (Page 2) (Full)
September 5, 2007

The government and the ruling coalition of the Liberal Democratic Party and New Komeito began yesterday to mull a new legislative measure to create a new law instead of extending the Antiterrorism Special Measures Law. This new legislation is aimed primarily at continuing the Self-Defense Forces' overseas activities, with cooperation obtained from the leading opposition Democratic Party of Japan (Minshuto), even after Nov. 1 when the Antiterrorism Special Measures Law is to expire. To that end, the government and the ruling coalition will have the DPJ's standpoint reflected in the new legislation as much as possible.

The Antiterrorism Special Measures Law stipulates that the Diet is to give its "ex post facto approval" to the government for its overseas dispatch of SDF personnel. In the Diet's past deliberations on this special antiterror legislation, however, the DPJ insisted that the government should ask the Diet for its "prior approval." In addition, the DPJ has also sought to unveil facts about the MSDF's refueling activities in the Indian Ocean. The government and the ruling coalition are therefore thinking to have the newly planned legislation stipulate prior approval and information disclosure on the MSDF's refueling activities.

The LDP-led government is now likely to give up from the start on presenting a bill revising the antiterror law. "If we introduce the new legislation in the first place," a Cabinet Secretariat official says, "it will be possible to secure much more time to discuss the new legislation." Also, the current antiterror law allows the SDF to engage in transportation as well as repair and maintenance services, in addition to refueling activities and other underway replenishment services. However, there is also an idea that limits the SDF's overseas assistance activities to underway replenishment only. This is intended to emphasize the importance of refueling activities and is also aimed at obtaining the DPJ's understanding for the SDF's continued activities.

However, the DPJ has recently been asserting that the SDF's overseas activities that are not based on any United Nations resolution are

TOKYO 00004108 005 OF 010

unacceptable. Given this assertion, the new legislation may also fail to get the DPJ's agreement.

In Diet deliberations, the opposition-controlled House of Councillors may vote down the legislation or may not act on it within 60 days. The Constitution, however, stipulates that a bill which is passed by the House of Representatives, and upon which the House of Councillors makes a decision different from that of the House of Representatives, becomes a law when passed a second time by the House of Representatives by a majority of two-thirds or more of the members present. Based on this constitutional stipulation, a senior official of the Defense Ministry says, "Even after the SDF pulls out, there is another way, and that is to enact a new law in an ordinary session of the Diet next year and send the SDF again."

7) Scope column: DPJ taking steady steps to oppose extending the antiterrorism law

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 2) (Full)
September 5, 2007

Yoichi Takeuchi

The main opposition Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ or Minshuto) is steadily taking strategic steps to oppose extending the Antiterrorism Special Measures Law, an issue that is certain to take center stage at an upcoming extraordinary session of the Diet, which is to be convened on Sept. 10. The DPJ takes no notice of the desperate moves by the government and the ruling bloc to somehow bring it into discussion so as to elicit concessions from it over an extension of that law. We probed the strategy of the DPJ, which appears to be on the road to scrapping the law.

Meeting the press on Sept. 3 in Karuizawa Town, Nagano Prefecture, DPJ President Ichiro Ozawa swept aside an idea of creating new legislation intended for continuing the Maritime Self-Defense Force's (MSDF) refueling operations, which has been floated in the government and the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). Ozawa told reporters: "We can't allow Japan to take part in any peacekeeping operations that are not clearly authorized by the United Nations."

When Ozawa met with US Ambassador to Japan Thomas Schieffer in August, he indicated his intention to oppose an extension of the law directly to the ambassador, who had expressed hope for the extension. Ozawa's tough stance toward this extension issue is particularly noticeable.

Even at a meeting yesterday of Diet policy chiefs from opposition parties, the DPJ, the Japanese Communist Party, the Social Democratic Party (SDP), and the People's New Party (PNP) confirmed the policy of not allowing any extension of the antiterrorism law.

Why has the DPJ assumed such a hard-line stance? The reason is perhaps because if it easily compromises with the ruling bloc at the upcoming extraordinary Diet session, which is likely to draw the public's attention all the more for the reversal of the positions in the Upper House between the ruling and opposition parties, the DPJ will lose the public's support. Despite repeated proposals made by the government and the ruling bloc for talks between the ruling and opposition parties, the DPJ has shown no sign of responding to them.

TOKYO 00004108 006 OF 010

Some specific ideas for scrapping the antiterrorism law have been floated.

One is to kill the bill by taking time for thorough discussion. Discussion of a bill extending the Antiterrorism Special Measures Law is likely to begin in early October if things go smoothly. By using the right to investigate state affairs, which is now available to the DPJ in the Upper House, the DPJ can pursue the government and the ruling parties over, for instance, details of the MSDF's refueling activities, their effects, and details of operations of US troops who received refueling and thereby can delay a vote until

Nov. 1, when the law expires.

In the meantime, DPJ Policy Research Council Chairman Masayuki Naoshima has mentioned the possibility of submitting a bill aimed at repealing the antiterrorism law in order to withdraw the MSDF from the Indian Ocean. If a bill repealing the law is approved first in the Upper House before the Lower House, even if a bill extending the antiterrorism law is sent to the Upper House from the Lower House, the DPJ can kill the extension bill in line with the principle of the "prohibition against double jeopardy," which means that bills of the same kind are not put to a vote again.

Additionally, an idea of compiling a set of measures for civilian assistance in the nonmilitary area, for instance, medical treatment and food aid, has been floated. If the DPJ raises opposition for the sake of opposition, its ability to hold the reins of government will be questioned.

Also, a council intended to examine problems concerning an extension of the antiterrorism law has been established in the DPJ. The council consists mainly of mid-level and junior lawmakers. The reason the council was established is that if the DPJ further prepares itself against a theoretical dispute, it can influence public opinion, and thereby may affect even conservative lawmakers in the party. Those lawmakers may easily turn around to oppose the bill extending the antiterrorism law.

Yet, some in the LDP echoed a mid-level lawmaker's view that "Given relations with the United States, the DPJ can more demonstrate its ability to hold the reins of government by holding discussion of revisions to the bill extending the antiterrorism law and putting into the bill a way for the MSDF to withdraw and then supporting the bill."

8) Fierce battle to occur over politics and money in coming Diet session

YOMIURI (Page 4) (Full)
September 5, 2007

Ahead of the extraordinary Diet session to be convened on Sept. 10, the ruling and opposition camps yesterday started preparations for a fierce tug-of-war in the extra session by holding meetings of their Diet Affairs Committee chairmen. The ruling coalition will give top priority to the issue of extending the Antiterrorism Special Measures Law, while the opposition bloc intends to concentrate on the issue of "politics and money."

LDP Diet Affairs Committee Chairman Tadamori Oshima conveyed yesterday to New Komeito Diet Affairs Committee Chairman Yoshio Urushibara the LDP's plan that the extra session will last for 62

TOKYO 00004108 007 OF 010

days from Sept. 10 until Nov. 10. He also said: "I have heard that the government will submit about 10 new bills. The extension of the Antiterrorism Law is the most important issue."

Meanwhile, four opposition parties -- the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), Japanese Communist Party (JCP), Social Democratic Party (SDP) and People's New Party (PNP) -- agreed in a meeting of their Diet Affairs Committee chairmen to pursue the issue of wasting tax money by using the right of a Diet member to investigate state affairs, following the resignation of Agriculture Minister Takehiko Endo in connection with an agricultural mutual aid association that he headed which had improperly received government subsidies. The opposition will ask for intensive deliberations on the politics-money issue at the budget committees of the two houses.

The opposition camp also has decided to make a list of lawmakers who serve as executives of entities that receive government subsidies.

In the Upper House, the LDP and DPJ held last evening a meeting of their Diet Affairs Committee chairmen to discuss the allotment of Standing Committee chairmen. Coordination ended in failure, as both parties sought the Budget Committee chairman's post. So they will again discuss the matter today.

LDP Upper House Budget Committee Chairman Seiji Suzuki stressed: "Since the DPJ has the post of Steering Committee chairman, the post of the Budget Committee chairman goes to the LDP. This is a gentlemen's agreement." DPJ Diet Affairs Committee Chairman Susumu Yanase, however, did not accept Suzuki's assertion.

There are 17 standing committee chairman posts in the Upper House. In the August extra Diet session, the agreement was reached that the DPJ would hold the Diet Steering Committee chairman's post, but the distribution of the remaining 16 posts is undecided.

9) LDP lawmaker Kobayashi quits, dealing another blow to Abe administration: Third blow in two days

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 2) (Full)
September 5, 2007

The resignation of Upper House member Yutaka Kobayashi of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) due to violation of the election law has dealt another blow to the Abe administration, which is faltering from the resignation of Agriculture Minister Takehiko Endo.

Concerning the resignation of Kobayashi, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on Sept. 4 told reporters at the Prime Minister's Office (Kantei), "I would like to fulfill my responsibility by doing my best to prevent a recurrence of such an incident." The Abe administration suffered three setbacks Sept. 3-4, including the resignation of Endo and former Agriculture Minister Tokuichiro Tamazawa's departure from the party.

There is a strong possibility of Kobayashi's election being nullified, if a trial of defendants involved in the violation of the election law proceeds.

Kobayashi found himself in a difficult situation, in which he was urged to make a decision before that happened, as a senior Upper House member put it.

TOKYO 00004108 008 OF 010

If Kobayashi remained a lawmaker, the opposition camp would have taken advantage of it in attacking the ruling camp. Even if Kobayashi quits, the number of the ruling camp's seats will remain unchanged, because the seat will be given to Akira Matsu of the New Komeito, who ended up as runner up. As such, the prevalent view in the ruling camp has been that it would be desirable for Kobayashi to quit before the extraordinary Diet session is convened."

10) Environment Minister Kamoshita's funds management body fails to explain 8 million yen in borrowing; Sloppy funds reports

YOMIURI (Top play) (Excerpts)
September 5, 2007

The funds management body of Environment Minister Ichiro Kamoshita, 58, elected from the Lower House Tokyo No. 13 constituency, recorded only 2 million yen as borrowings in its income and expenditure report for the year the borrowing occurred, although the body has declared 10 million yen as borrowing for eight years in its political funds report, the Yomiuri Shimbun has found. A Kamoshita office source simply said about the 8 million yen difference: "There are no documents today that can prove the exact amount of borrowing, so we don't know it." Kamoshita noted: "Some might call it sloppy, and I must bear such criticism."

Under the Political Funds Control Law, politicians' funds management organizations are required to declare not only their incomes and expenditures but also their real estate holdings and liabilities in order to secure the transparency of political funds and to keep political activities' verifiable. Borrowings must be entered into the income column in the income and expenditure report for the year the borrowing occurred, and the balance in excess of 1 million yen and the date of borrowing must be entered in the assets column. Repaid money must be entered into the expenditures column.

The assets in the 1998-2005 funds reports prepared by Kamoshita's funds management organization included 10 million yen each year allegedly borrowed from Kamoshita in August 1996. But the income in the 1996 funds report declared only 2 million yen as a borrowing.

The Kamoshita office initially indicated to the Yomiuri Shimbun that there was a high likelihood that the organization had borrowed 10 million yen in 1996. But there is no mention in the 1996 funds report of the 8 million yen difference, as well as the dates when the money were spent or how it was spent.

11) LDP begins coordination to reinstate Hiranuma into party

YOMIURI (Page 2) (Full)
September 5, 2007

The Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) leadership launched yesterday coordination to allow former trade minister Takeo Hiranuma, who had left the LDP due to his opposition to the government's postal privatization drive, to rejoin it. Hiranuma represents the Lower House Okayama No. 3 electoral district. The party leadership does not intend to ask him to submit a written pledge to support the postal-privatization program, which the LDP had sought him as a condition for his return. Coordination of candidates for the Okayama No. 3 constituency will be a future challenge.

Secretary General Taro Aso stated at a press conference yesterday:

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TOKYO 00004108 009 OF 010

"I think there are various views in the LDP Okayama prefectoral chapter, but we (the leadership) have no objection to Mr. Hiranuma's rejoining the party. We have no intention to ask him for a written pledge." Aso later telephoned Hiranuma to convey the party leadership's view. Hiranuma then told Aso that he would make a decision after consulting with his support group.

Hiranuma submitted last November to the LDP a letter requesting the party to allow him to return to it. However, since then Secretary General Hidenao Nakagawa conditioned to present a written pledge stipulating his support for postal-privatization, Hiranuma refused to do so. Other 11 postal rebels who had submitted their written pledges were reinstated. Hiranuma won as an independent in the 2005 Lower House election, defeating Toshiko Abe, a candidate backed the LDP. Abe, however, won a Lower House seat in the proportional representation segment.

12) DPJ to staff its frontline with veterans to face off with ruling parties; Junior members encouraged to make preparations for next general election

MAINICHI (Page 5) (Excerpts)
September 5, 2007

Ichiro Ozawa, president of the major opposition Democratic Party of Japan, decided yesterday to appoint vice presidents and former party executives as directors of such organizations as the Lower House Rules and Administration Committee and the Budget Committee where the ruling and opposition blocs are expected to lock horns in the upcoming extraordinary Diet session. Ozawa also plans to launch the Lower House's next cabinet made up in principle of lawmakers who are now serving in their fourth term or more in order to face off with the embattled Abe administration. This means to encourage junior members to make preparations for the next election. Ozawa apparently aims to apply pressure on the government and ruling coalition by using veteran members to pave the way for Lower House dissolution and a snap general election that will follow.

Yoshio Hachiro, a former election campaign chief who is now serving in his sixth term, has already been informally named as the foreign minister responsible for the question of extending the Antiterrorism Special Measures Law in the next cabinet to be announced today. The lineup of executive posts, which used to be dominated by policy specialists serving in their two to three terms, is also likely to change significantly. The party in principle will not give committee

directors posts to junior members so that they can visit their home turfs frequently.

13) Yasuo Tanaka of New Party Nippon to form joint parliamentary group with DPJ

ASAHI (Page 1) (Full)
September 5, 2007

Yasuo Tanaka, representative of the New Party Nippon (NPN), elected for the first time to the Diet in the July House of Councillors election, and Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) President Ichiro Ozawa agreed yesterday to form a joint parliamentary group at the upcoming extraordinary Diet session. Ozawa and Tanaka will announce the plan in a joint press conference as early as today. Although Tanaka is the only member of the NPN, the DPJ has hopes for Tanaka's popularity and assertiveness, as his party won 1.77 million votes in

TOKYO 00004108 010 OF 010

the July election. The DPJ intends to take advantage of Tanaka in Diet battles at the extra session.

After the Upper House race, Tanaka has worked on coordination to form a parliamentary group, secretly contacting Ozawa and Secretary General Yukio Hatoyama. Tanaka reportedly will hold a regular meeting once a month with Ozawa and Hatoyama to exchange views.

Tanaka now serves on the Upper House Committee on Land, Infrastructure and Transport. After forming the parliamentary group with the DPJ, he will be able to attend other committee sessions and gain question time. He will be also allowed to debate Prime Minister Shinzo Abe at the Budget Committee and plenary sessions, which will be broadcast on television. The DPJ side also will be able to increase its assertiveness.

Tanaka since he was governor of Nagano Prefecture has deepened a friendship with Ozawa. In the 2003 House of Representatives election, Tanaka's name was on a list of the DPJ's "cabinet members." Some in the DPJ are cautious about the idea from the position of questioning Tanaka's political methods during his tenure as Nagano governor. Tanaka, however, said: "We have many common interests. I would like to work with the DPJ to carry out President Ozawa's reform drive."

Ozawa, meanwhile, has looked at the possibility of forming a parliamentary group with the People's New Party (PNP). The DPJ and PNP submitted a bill to freeze the postal-privatization program to the previous extraordinary Diet session. Ozawa was in contact with PNP President Tamisuke Watanuki several times, but he failed to coordinate views since some in the PNP were cautious.

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